



## OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM UPDATE

Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs

March 21, 2003  
0900 hrs.

### Situational Update

- News reports from embedded media early this morning indicate that the United States Marine Corps have taken the Southern Iraqi town of Umm Qasr.
- Overnight reports from embedded media also include the first images of Iraqi soldiers surrendering to coalition forces.
- News reports and satellite imagery indicate that a handful of oil fields in Northern and Southern Iraq are burning. DoD has not confirmed the cause of these fires.
- British Royal Marines have seized control of oil manifolds in the south eliminating Saddam's ability to dump oil in the Gulf as he did in 1991.
- A U.S. Marine Corps CH-46E Sea Knight Helicopter carrying both U.S. and U.K. military personnel crashed early this morning south of Umm Qasr, near Highway 801 in Kuwait. The crash occurred at approximately 3:00 a.m. local time. There were no U.S. survivors. The names and units of the casualties are being withheld pending next of kin notification.

### Ground Truth From Yesterday

- An unidentified missile struck outside Camp Commando at approximately 10:28 am on 3/20/03.
  - An NBC monitor team was dispatched and completed a survey of the site. No chemical munitions were found.
- PATRIOT firing batteries successfully engaged and destroyed two tactical ballistic missiles during an attack on Kuwait at approximately 12:24 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. (4:24 a.m. and 5:30 a.m. EST) on 3/20/03.

### Important Transcripts

DoD News Briefing - Secretary Rumsfeld And Gen. Myers: 3/20/03

[http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2003/t03202003\\_t0320sd.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2003/t03202003_t0320sd.html)

### Key Points

- We Urge the Iraqi military to lay down their arms, refuse any order to use WMD, and act with honor to save their country.
  - Iraqi military who follow orders to destroy Iraqi dams or oil, flood villages, or commit crimes against the Iraqi people will be found, punished, and denied any hope of amnesty or leniency with respect to past actions.
- US and coalition forces in Iraq are performing superbly and focused on their mission-to make it clear that:
  - Saddam's regime is at an end, and it is pointless to support him;
  - That the threat to our forces, friends and allies in the region, from Iraqi weapons and defenses, will be rapidly removed;
  - That Iraqi territory will be liberated as quickly as possible, until there is no longer any place where Saddam can hide;
  - That as soon as conditions permit, we will eliminate all WMD and begin the transition to a broad-based government under which the Iraqi people can live in freedom.

### Fact Sheets Attached

CH-46E Sea Knight Helicopter

### Today in DoD

Secretary Rumsfeld is tentatively scheduled to hold a press briefing at 1:00 p.m. EST. Press briefings may be viewed on Senate Channel 27 or House Channel 24.

For Press Secretary or MLA Inquiries on Current Operations:

Call Legislative Affairs (703) 697-6210

Or Refer To:

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